The Strub Building (1025 P Street Building)
1025 P Street
Sacramento
Sacramento County
California

HABS No. CA-2300

HABS
CAL,
34-SAC,
60-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
THE STRUB BUILDING (1025 P Street Building) HABS No. CA-2300

Location:	Southeastern corner of the block surrounded by 10th, 11th, O and P Streets in the City of Sacramento, Sacramento County
Present Owner:	State of California
Present Occupants:	Various State Agencies
Present Use:	State office space
Significance:	The building maintains integrity of setting within actively used State government buildings in the area. It contributes historically to the government district surrounding the Capitol. The Strub building is associated with development of a State building complex in downtown, 1911 to the present. It was the fourth State building to be constructed following the Legislature's decision to direct a State building program in Sacramento. The original tenants of the building were the California Highway Commission (precursor to Caltrans) and the Division of Motor Vehicles. The building has been in continuous use as a State office building since its completion in 1926. The building was constructed by Charles H. Strub with the intent to lease it to the State as office space. The architect was F. Eugene Barton of San Francisco who designed the building in a Period Revival style imitating Gothic motives. Its most significant architectural elements are the P and 11th Street facades and the P Street decorative art tiles on the entry lobby stairs and stairs to the second floor.
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PART I. PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF THE STRUB BUILDING

The original four story structure of the Strub Building dates to 1926-29. It is on the southeastern corner of the downtown Sacramento city block surrounded by 10th, 11th, O and P Streets. An alley separates the Strub Building from an adjacent building. The original Strub Building was designed to be square in plan; however, the building was neither designed nor built of uniform height in 1926, and has seen several additions and major alterations. The formal P Street and 11th Street facades were initially built to four stories in an L-shaped configuration. The remaining northwestern corner of the building was built to two stories in the innermost section and to three stories along the alley. In 1929 a major addition added a fourth floor unit above the three-story rear alley section. In 1945 a two-story addition was constructed along the western edge of the 1926-29 structure. In 1946 another three-story addition continued the two-story unit to a full height of five stories.

The Strub Building has its major entrance along P Street, with its major facade facing south. Its secondary public facade faces east on 11th Street. The rear facade (facing the alley) and the western facing facade (toward 10th Street) are non-public facades.

Street configuration from 1915 to construction of the Strub Building showed the streets surrounding the block as 80 feet wide with a 20 foot alley running through the block at mid-point from east to west. The original Strub Building was contained in roughly the southeastern quadrant of the block bounded by the alley and 11th/P Streets. The building had loading docks at its rear facade. The 1945-46 additions to the building extended the structure farther into the block to the west.

Today the surrounding streets have somewhat specialized functions. Tenth Street is a major artery into the core of the State Capitol, placing what was the non-public facade of the Strub Building in a public viewshed. Eleventh Street is less heavily used by concentrated vehicular traffic, but is actively used by a mix of pedestrians and autos in conjunction with State business. The major facade of the Strub Building along P Street is a major one-way east-west artery through downtown to the freeway system.

The Strub Building is part of the State Capitol core area of Sacramento. The core area contains the State Capitol and numerous state office buildings housing agencies performing the functions of California's state government. The Capitol grounds, bounded by 10th, 15th, L and N Streets in the north-central part of this core area, consist of the Capitol itself and its surrounding park. The Capitol is one and one-half blocks north of the Strub Building. This Classical Revival structure, originally built between 1860 and 1874, was restored in the 1980s. The Capitol is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

West of the State Capitol, and two and one-half blocks from the Strub Building, stand the Library and Courts Building and Office Building No. 1 (officially renamed the Jesse Unruh Building after a former California State Treasurer). These two buildings face one another across a park containing a fountain that is circled by Capitol Mall. (Although Capitol Mall west of this group is a broad four lane avenue with a median parkway, it narrows at this point to a one-lane paved circle.) Both buildings, similar to one another in design and expressing the Neo Classical style, were constructed between 1922 and 1928 and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They were the first state buildings built following legislation in 1911 authorizing construction of state office buildings.

PART II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A. GENERAL INTERPRETIVE BACKGROUND

The Strub building was originally designed and built by Charles H. Strub in 1926. The structure was privately financed and built to be leased to the State as office space. Several of the initial State agency occupants had previously been housed in the Forum Building at 1107 - 9th Street (at the corner of 9th and K Streets). Construction of the Strub building, however, was with the intent that the State could purchase the structure within a 10-year period (Sacramento Bee, September 12, 1927).

The Strub building was designed by San Francisco architect F. Eugene Barton. Barton had worked for a number of years--at least pre-dating World War I--in the San Francisco office of prominent architect Lewis P. Hobart. As he was well known in association with Hobart, it can be assumed that he must have occupied a key or chief draftsman position. Hobart maintained one of the more successful San Francisco firms of this era; he handled substantial commissions for urban commercial buildings and for large residences in Burlingame, Hillsborough and San Mateo. Barton left Hobart's firm for the war effort and returned to it following. In April 1926 he announced opening his own office in San Francisco.

Barton won the commission from Dr. Charles Henry Strub for the Sacramento office building very soon after he opened his firm. The blueprints for the building, held by the Office of the State Architect, are dated July 1926. F. Eugene Barton, working in partnership with Claude Barton, may have known his client from his work for Hobart. Dr. Charles H. Strub had practiced as a dentist from 1906 through 1915, but is best known as an investment entrepeneur. He was president of the San Francisco Baseball Club, 1917-38, and later a key figure behind the Los Angeles Turf Club (Santa Anita racetrack). For Dr. Strub, the Sacramento office building appears to have been an investment to be held and sold for profit. Eugene Barton is not well known historically: his other clients of this period appear to be of only random note. The design of the Strub Building borrowed heavily from that of Lewis P. Hobart's Alexander Building of 1923. A San Francisco skyscraper with Gothic motifs, the Alexander Building may well have been a building worked on by Barton when he was still with Hobart's firm.

The Strub Building was ready for occupancy in December 1926. California Highways noted that it had been "planned and built for the particular use of the departments now occupying it." The building was described as "a Christmas present from the Board of Control." Two growing, prominent agencies shared the building: the California Highway Commission (precursor to Caltrans) and the Division of Motor Vehicles. Motor Vehicles and the Bureau of Criminal Identification used the first two floors as office space and public space. Blueprints for the Strub Building show the basement as plate storage for Motor Vehicles, and the northwestern corner of the first floor as a printing plant for Motor Vehicles. The Highway Commission headquarters staff occupied the entire third floor, while the Highway Division offices III and X occupied the fourth floor. (These Division offices are now Caltrans' District Offices III and X--in Marysville and Stockton.) Blueprints also show additional specific uses for the third floor: surveys, plans, maintenance, and, along the rear wall, the Bridge Department drafting room and offices. Additional specific uses for the fourth floor were Division drafting along the rear, Right of Way, photostat and blueprint rooms.

In July 1927 Assembly Bill No. 1119 took effect, reorganizing certain State departments. The State Highway Commission became the Division of State Highways under the Department of Public Works. Other divisions under Public Works were Engineering and Irrigation, Architecture, Water Rights and Ports. At this point the Strub Building was jointly shared by the Department of Public Works and the Division of Motor Vehicles (which was under the Department of Finance). In September 1927 the State purchased the building from Charles Strub, with three payments to be made over three years. Each payment was to be $200,000, with the first made on the date of agreement. The State had been leasing the building at $138,000 per year. In actuality it was the Division of Highways within the Department of Public Works that purchased the building in 1927--with the arrangement that other State agencies occupying the building would continue to pay rent as they had to the private owner. (At the point when rent exceeded actual costs, depreciation and repairs, then the other occupying agencies would begin to accrue equity in the building.)

From 1927, then, the 1025 P Street building ceased being actively known as the Strub Building. From the date of purchase by the Division of Highways it was apparently most commonly called the Public Works Building. After full payment had been made in September 1929, the building was also known as Office Building No. 2. Further, in 1929 the Division of Motor Vehicles was transferred from the Department of Finance to the Department of Public Works. For a period, then, the two names, the Public Works Building and Office Building No. 2, were equally accurate. By November 1929 the addition to the 1025 P Street Building was discussed in California Highways and Public Works; the fourth floor addition was used for additional drafting space.

Both the Department of Public Works (primarily Division of State Highways within it) and the Division of Motor Vehicles continued to expand. In 1931, Motor Vehicles was created as an independent Department for the State. By the middle 1930s it was becoming apparent that both Motor Vehicles and Public Works needed their own large buildings. Motor Vehicles had taken over more

and more of the actual building space and was paying rent to Public Works such that it actually had the larger equity in the structure. Both departments could afford to finance new buildings without any additional taxpayer monies through their equities in the 1025 P Street building. Buildings for each agency, nearly twin, were built on opposite corners of 12th Street along N Street by mid-1937.

Following the removal of Motor Vehicles and Public Works from the 1025 P Street building, the Department of Finance purchased the building equities from both agencies. The Department of Finance, which had been an original occupant through the Division of Motor Vehicles, has stayed in the building in some fashion from 1937 to date--with the Franchise Tax Board (under Finance) in the building from at least the 1940s. The Department of Employment also used the building from 1937 until it received its own building on Capitol Mall in 1955. It is probably from the mid-1950s date that the Franchise Tax Board became clearly associated with the building. The 1025 P Street building then became commonly known as the Franchise Tax Building until that agency moved to another building. The structure is now owned by the Department of General Services.

1. Structural System and Building Form

The original Strub Building is a multi-level reinforced concrete building with raised basement. Its foundation system is reinforced concrete spread column footings. Basement, first, second, third and fourth story flooring, as well as exterior walls, are reinforced concrete slab construction. The overall system for the building is reinforced concrete column-and-slab framing. Columns are circular, with spiral reinforcing, and have mushroom capitals. The fourth floor was finished with wood columns and roof.

In plan and in elevation, the Strub Building as built in 1926 offers a somewhat complicated structure. The P Street and the 11th Street facades were carried back into the block three bays and were constructed to a height of four stories which form the formal four-story L-shaped corner unit. The remaining northwestern six bay by six bay portion of the building was carried to two stories in the innermost section (three bays deep and six bays wide parallel to P Street), while the rear section was carried to three stories. In addition, a light well three bays wide and less than one bay deep was set in from the western wall in mid-facade. The airspace above the mid-section of the building was actually only five bays wide and three bays deep. The end portion of the unit at the western edge appears to have been cut short by one bay for the entire three bay depth of the section. The basement of the building, a northwestern corner section four bays deep by six bays wide, was left unexcavated.

2. Exterior Design and Materials

The Strub Building, generally designed to be 160 feet by 160 feet, had two major facades--with the exceptions discussed above. The primary facade, with the main entrance to the building, faces P Street. The secondary facade, with

another entrance, faces 11th Street. No ancillary structures appear to have been constructed to abutt the west facade. The cut out area at the northwestern corner, one bay wide by three bays deep, faced the side of a late 19th century house. The house was not at this location in 1915, and was probably moved to the site between 1915 and 1926--possibly during the 1922 construction of the California State Printing Office (Archives Building) on the northeastern quadrant of the block. In any case, the west facade was a non-public facade. To the north, the Strub Building faced the rear of the State Printing Office across the alley running between the two structures. The rear facade is also a non-public facade.

The facade massing for P and 11th Streets is characterized by seven large bays bracketed by one narrower bay on either side--nine bays in all. Bays are shallowly inset and are separated by pilasters running the four-story height of the building. Each bay is further divided into three vertical parts by slender ribs, ground to cornice. Thus, although the structure is much wider than it is tall, the facade detailing is of a type most appropriate for a skyscraper or tower. The vertical detailing here is in conflict with the structural system of column-and-slab for a squat structure. Fenestration is broken up into small vertical units in each bay rather than large panels of inset wall glass--again an impression accomplished by the pilasters and ribbing. Even the six over six, vertical paned, double-hung format for the wood sash windows emphasized the vertical.

Stylistic detailing falls broadly into the category of Period Revivals popular throughout the 1920s and 1930s in the U.S. In particular, the chosen Gothic motives (not Gothic Revival) were favored by architects working in skyscraper and tower design at this time. Choice of Gothic imitated detail was deliberate to emphasize height. Slender pilasters and repetitive vertical ribbing, vertical patterning of windows, layered setbacks and decorative web-like tracery were all employed to make the structure dematerialize and to make a building soar. Such buildings as Cass Gilbert's Woolworth Building in New York, 1911-13, and Howells & Hood's Tribune Tower in Chicago, 1922-25, were well-known models to architects working with these ideas during the 1920s. In the Strub Building, Gothic Period Revival elements include the shallow layered segmented arch in each of the bays at the first story level, the Gothic-inspired web-tracery in the narrow pointed arch panels above the segmented arches of the first story, the layered flat arches framing the fourth story windows, and the webbed rosette medalions along the top of the building beneath the cornice. Exterior surfacing materials are cement stucco. Even decorative features, like the web-tracery in the arches and the rosette medallions, are cast cement. The structure has been painted several times since its construction.

Entrance bays on P and 11th Streets were apparently designed and built as identical, although only that on P Street remains today. The P Street entrance was the main entrance and is set in the fifth bay from the west; the 11th Street entrance was a secondary entrance and is set six bays from the south. (Alterations in the late 1950s modified the 11th Street entrance and added another entrace next to it in the seventh bay.) In each entrance, a

glass tympanum composed of individual vertical panes set wetween metal sash and mullions (noted as bronze on the original blueprints) adds to the open lightness of the ground story.

The two non-public facades of the Strub Building, to the west and to the rear (north), were both executed with much less detail. The rear facade continued the treatment of P and 11th Streets around the corner three bays with a rear entrance door as well. Beyond this point the facade became radically simplified, with metal sash fenestration. No decorative detail highlighted the facade from the fourth through eighth bays; windows are flush with the wall surface and horizontal in type. The rear facade reflects the actual structure of the building. Windows act like panels of glass, with wide squarish panes in each bay. The original facade treatment to the west is harder to analyze. Presumably the utilitarian facade of the rear was also the treatment of the west with varied height from four to two to three stories for the three different sections of the building.

3. Interior Design and Materials

The interior of the Strub Building was originally designed as office space with numerous hollow tile partition walls. Over its life as a state building many interior changes have been made to revamp corridors and offices. No original floor coverings, ceiling treatments or lighting fixtures appear to remain.

The most significant interior space in the original building appears to have been the P Street entrance lobby. Multi-colored terra cotta tile highlights the stepped entry with a marble entry floor still existing. The stair step tile continues on the risers to the second floor with plain earthen red terra cotta tile on the steps themselves. The stair steps become plain tile after the second floor up to the fourth floor. Metal newel posts and detailed balusters also become simpler after the second floor. Originally an ornamental plaster ribbed ceiling also highlighted the entry lobby. The brightly colored patterned tile and the ribbed ceiling would have complemented the exterior Gothic derived motives. The second entry from 11th Street used the plain red tile and simpler balustrade for its stairs.

4. Modifications

Alterations on the P Street facade appear to be relatively minor. They primarily consist of the more recent entry door and exterior painting. On the 11th Street facade the major change was renovation of the sixth bay entry and addition of a new entry in the seventh bay, both executed in 1955-59. Accompanying signage also appears to date from this time. The rear facade also has had little alteration to the original 1926 structure. Two steel roll doors in the fourth and eighth bays are original. Fenestration, although markedly different from the fourth bay through the eighth bay, is also all original. The enclosed ramp walkway connecting the Strub Building (1025 P Street) with the Archives Building (1020 O Street) dates to 1967-68. Later additions on the west have completely removed the original facade from view.

Street trees were planned along the south and east facades from the time of design. Whether the architect's perspective drawing accurately reflected the placement and number of trees that actually were planted is not known. However, the trees rounding the corner along P and 11th Streets are all of like type and are mature. These seven Chinese elm trees are fast-growing and likely date to the major renovations of 1955-59. The two mature American elms south of the building may date to the 1920s.

Interior alterations to the building are very heavy. Nearly nothing remains that is original, or reflective of original design and intent, except the entry lobby on P Street. Stairs on the 11th Street facade have lost the character of their designed setting. In particular, over $1 million in alterations took place for the Department of Finance, 1955-59.

5. Additions

In 1929 the first major addition was made to the Strub Building. A fourth floor was added over the three-story portion of the building in the northwest corner. This addition was apparently five bays wide and three bays deep, thus still leaving a one bay wide by three bay deep section cut out at the very corner. At the time the building had been designed in 1926, the architect included future expansion plans for a fourth floor in this portion of the structure. The change involved removing a part of the rear upper wall and continuing the design-structure of the rear facade/bays. Thus, in 1929 the California Division of Architecture (changed from the Bureau of Architecture) could merely follow the planned design for the addition.

A two-story reinforced concrete addition was made to the west in 1945. A change of order in 1946 added three more stories to complete the addition to a full height of five stories. Fenestration is large panels of windows of metal sash type, five panes wide by four tall. The horizontal emphasis is enhanced by a wide flat band between the floors running north to south. This effect even more drastically breaks with the attempted Gothic motif of the 1926 formal facades. To the rear the two bays are handled in a similar way with the addition of glass brick panels for the stairwell portion. It is presumed that sometime prior to 1945 the 19th century house must have been removed and the single bay, three deep, unit filled in.

B. INTERIOR DECORATIVE ART TILE

The major P Street entrance to the Strub Building is highlighted by the remains of a tiled foyer. Altered over the lifetime of the structure, the entry room is no longer characteristic of its original 1926 construction in general terms. However, the wide entry stair and the first-to-second floor narrow stair do exist in nearly original condition. Three patterns of art tile, manufactured by Gladding, McBean and Company, face the stair risers in an alternating sequence. These tiles were among the first decorative art tiles to be designed and manufactured by the Tropico Pottery Company in Glendale after its takeover by Gladding McBean. The Tropico Pottery Company

became the Southern California branch of Lincoln-based Gladding McBean in Northern California. By the mid-1920s, Tropico was being remade as the chief site for Gladding McBean's manufacture of decorative art tile, while the Lincoln site continued production of exterior architectural terra cotta, roof tile and industrial tile. The 1926 tiles present in the Strub Building were among the earliest art tiles produced by the staff of artists hired by Gladding McBean and gathered together at the Tropico site. As such, these tiles are representative of the American, and more particularly the Californian, interest and increasingly refined development in decorative art tile, ca. 1925-30. Efforts in the design of art tile were especially striking before the major economic depression following 1929.

1. Identifying the Tile in the Strub Building

The stair riser tile in the Strub Building is a type of thin terra cotta surfacing tile, or ceramic veneer, of high quality commonly known as faience tile.[1] Tiles are five and three-quarters inches wide by four and three-quarters inches high for the first-to-second floor stair and five and three-quarters inches wide by four inches high for the wide entry stair. Tiles are of a raised line type, with color areas depressed, and are moderately glazed. Overall colors are a vivid yellow, a deep cobalt blue, aquamarine, an earthen red, black and cream (off-white). Simplest in pattern is the tile designed in alternative squares of black and cream, with a typical pattern of six alternating squares across and five alternating squares down (four down for the wide entry stair). A cream square begins the pattern in the upper left hand corner. The two remaining tile patterns are more complex, each being a stylized geometric-floral design.

One of the two complex patterns features projecting and hanging plumes with gently serrated edges. A cobalt blue and aquamarine hanging plume occupies the center and half section hanging plumes bracket the tile from the sides. The lower half of the tile features two projecting plumes, predominately black with earthen red inner plume. Moving from left to right, the hanging and projecting plumes alternate across the tile against a cream background with a black baseline rectangle across the bottom edge. The second complex pattern features stylized sunbursts or flowers. An earthen red half sunburst/flower occupies the lower middle of the tile with rays of sunlight/flower petals (also in earthen red) radiating outward from a yellow half circle center. Quarter sunburst/flowers bracket the tile from the above corners, repeating the motif. The background between the rays/petals is black and fans out into a larger background area capped by a serrated yellow arch across the tile. Above the yellow arch is the final background of cobalt blue--which also extends between the rays/petals of the quarter sunbursts/flowers in the uppercorners. A black linear rectangle extends across the top of the tile, while a cobalt blue baseline rectangle extends across the bottom.

The decorative stair riser tile present in the 1926 Strub Building at 1025 P Street is identical to the stair riser tile used in the Belasco Theater in Los Angeles of the same year. Much more decorative tile is present in the

original Belasco Theater interior, with elaborate wall tile and especially ornate wainscotting with upper serrated edges--complemented by these three patterns of stair riser tile. A photograph of one interior stair from the Belasco Theater appears in the Gladding McBean journal Shapes of Clay from February 1927,[2] and clearly shows the tiled stair and thus establishes it as identical to that stair in the 1025 P Street Building. Most probably, the designs for the tile were developed for the Belasco Theater, selected slightly later for a subsequent use in the Sacramento office building.

Designed by the Southern California firm of Morgan, Walls & Clements, the Belasco Theater was one of several ornate theaters from these immediate years.[3] Most of these theaters were Spanish Colonial Revival (sometimes termed Spanish Colonial Renaissance) in style. Several had elaborate exterior facades, heavy with architectural terra cotta; the highly colorful, glazed interior decorative tile was considered an appropriate choice for accented interior spaces. Large-scale civic-governmental buildings and avant-garde smaller commercial buildings were the other two public building types employing the Spanish Colonial Revival with interior decorative tile during the 1925-30 years. Mansions and elaborately up-scale residences also utilized a more severe Spanish Colonial Revival exterior treatment with interior decorative tile. Use of this particular tile type and pattern seems somewhat unusual in the Strub Building; the Strub Building is a Gothic influenced Period Revival design of the 1920s--well removed from the Spanish Colonial Revival in its stylistic characteristics.[4] However, the newness and growing popularity of the interior decorative art tile may well have overridden any compulsions toward stylistic consistency.

Interior decorative tile from the Belasco Theater--thus including the pattern for the stair riser tiles used in the 1025 P Street Building--received immediate and substantial recognition by the art and architectural community of Southern California. The Southern California Chapter of the AIA gave its "Certificate of Honor in Fine Arts" for 1925-26 to Gladding McBean for "Design and Craftsmanship in Tile Work." Architects John Galen Howard, John Bakewell, Jr., and Arthur Brown, Jr. (of San Francisco) as well as Arthur L. Loveless (of Seattle) served on the awards committee.[5] It further appears that this award was for the very first excellent efforts of Gladding McBean under the artistic direction of architect Jesse Stanton. (See discussion under "Tropico Potteries" below.) Color, glazing, design and technique of manufacture for the interior Belasco Theater tiles are discussed in Shapes of Clay during the late 1920s. As the tiles in the 1025 P Street Building are identical to those of the Belasco Theater stair riser tiles, these discussions are pertinent to the 1025 P Street Building as well. Gladding McBean specifically labeled the decorative tile in the Belasco Theater (and in the photograph of the stair riser tiles themselves) as "Spanish Colonial Renaissance," noting the colors as "maroon, turquoise, black and white." (Colors for art tiles of this type are discussed further below.) In the same issue of Shapes of Clay, Gladding McBean further commented that the "serrated edge was specially designed to produce the effect peculiar to the architectural style" (in the Belasco Theater).[6] Gladding McBean cited color intensity and permanent luster as key features of the new decorative art tile, which the interior of the Belasco so

well represented. Sources for the art tile were "Persia" and "Moorish Spain:" on this subject, Gladding McBean, like so much of the American populace, apparently felt that an either-or approach to the terra cotta tile art of Spain, North Africa and the Near East was acceptable. Gladding McBean noted in February 1927: "Decorative tile, not only Mediterranean, but Persian and Oriental in feeling, was coming to be a distinguished specialty of Gladding, McBean and Co. at a time when not all of our architects were fully persuaded of its value."[7] As for technique of manufactures, the tile was of "raised-line" type: a ridge, or raised line, separated the areas of color from one another (all colored areas were depressed).[8] Such a technique was based on an historical Moorish tile type and technique--closely studied in the 1920s. The precedents of technique, as well as their 1920s reuse and adaptation, are discussed below.

2. Tropico Potteries

Tropico Potteries, the makers of the decorative art tile for the Strub Building at 1025 P Street in Sacramento began as Pacific Art Tile Company in March 1900. Its incorporators were J. P. Bliss and Daniel J. Ryan of Columbus, Ohio; Joseph Kirkham of Kirkham Art Tile and Pottery Company, Baberton, Ohio; J. C. Marquardt of Tiffen, Ohio; G. J. Griffith, W. H. Perry and George Easton of Los Angeles. These men set up the new West Coast company to manufacture "art and ornamental tiling for interior decoration, floors, et cetera." Experimental tiles went on display in a downtown Los Angeles office by early December 1900, with a fuller display by January 1901 in the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. At this initial date all clays were noted as from within a seventy mile radius of Los Angeles. A large exhibit was in preparation for the Buffalo Exposition of 1901 later in the year.[9] Tile was to be for sale shortly after these early months of experimentation.

Located at Tropico (incorporated as Glendale in 1918) six miles north of Los Angeles, the art tile company had some type of early instability, closing in the summer of 1904 for a short period of weeks. By August 1904 the tile factory had become Western Art Tile Works with active manufacture of "floor, wall, mantel and art tiles; plain, ornamental, and embossed vitreous china; sanitary ware, plumbers' earthenware, and other clay goods" by 1906. The California State Mining Bureau further described the Tropico works in 1906: "It is said to be the only factory of its kind west of the Rocky Mountains, and its progress will be watched with some interest. Many of its products require the finest quality of clays, which at present are imported from Europe. The ground silica and feldspar are also shipped from the Eastern States."[10]

Gladding McBean gave a similar early history for Tropico Potteries in Shapes of Clay. The larger company noted of the art tile sister enterprise that it had started as a "small faience and floor-tile plant" that began to make other products when it was unable to develop sufficient business to survive.[11] No history of the tile and potteries between 1906 and 1922 for Tropico has surfaced, although certainly detailed information must still exist in newspapers, journals and phamphlets for Los Angeles County. In its own

Supervisor's Policy Manual, Gladding McBean noted their takeover of Tropico Potteries as occurring in 1922, at which time "the decision was between vastly expanding the tile manufacture or abandoning it altogether. With much thought, an organization of artists and technicians was developed at Tropico, now the Glendale Plant, and tile manufacture expanded."[12]

Apparently operations were either low-key or preparatory at the Glendale site for the first few years after the Gladding McBean purchase. From the year of acquisition, 1922, until 1925, Gladding McBean appears to have been acquiring factory sites in Southern California--with Tropico bought in 1922 and the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company bought in 1924--and making the preliminary decisions as to what terra cotta products would be manufactured at each new factory under the larger company name. The Southern California expansion followed two major events for Gladding McBean: a major fire at the Lincoln plant in 1918 necessitated the replacement of all buildings and machinery, and the general curtailment of production during the first World War left the company anxious for expansion. Both Tropico Potteries and Los Angeles Pressed Brick were known product names; in both cases these early established company names continued to be used in conjunction with the Gladding McBean trade name. An advertisement in California Southland in January 1924 paired Gladding McBean and Company and Tropico Potteries, illustrating a relief vase in the "Italian-Renaissance" style made for the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. By May 1925, a half page advertisement for "Latin Roof Tile" appeared, with the notation that its manufacture was carried at two factory sites--the Lincoln Plant in Lincoln (Northern California) and the Tropico Plant in Glendale (Southern California).[13]

Events of 1922-23 at the Tropico site are unknown, but it seems reasonable to assume that it was during this initial period that a decision was made to use the site as the Southern California branch of Gladding McBean. As Tropico Potteries was an art tile and pottery company, rather than manufacturing of architectural terra cotta as well as of roof, floor and industrial tile, some revamping of the factory site must either have occurred or been discussed. Certainly the issue must have been whether or not to keep the facilities for art tile and pottery making--and as a corollary whether or not Gladding McBean should enter into the field of decorative faience tile and art pottery in a serious fashion. Some study of the American field of decorative tile may have occurred; certainly the rapidly excelerating interest in art tile during the 1920-23 years may have influenced Gladding McBean's decision process. In any case, by 1924 it is probable that a decision had been made to gear up for real entry into the American field of art tile producers, and to use the Tropico plant as the Gladding McBean base for such an effort. More than likely this decision did not become firm until after the purchase of the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company in 1924; purchase of the second Los Angeles company allowed Gladding McBean to extend its already established architectural terra cotta and roof-floor-industrial tile operations fully to Southern California and take on the avant-garde enterprise of art tile simultaneously.

Sometime during late 1924 or early 1925 Gladding McBean began to set up a full scale department for art tile at the Tropico site. One of the McBeans, Atholl

McBean, noted in 1927 that "we proposed to do in decorative tile what we had attempted...in terra-cotta and roof tile. We proposed to raise our decorative tile department to a position where it would command the respect of the most exacting architects, and where it might safely take the initiative in all matters of tile design and color, thereby enlarging the opportunities of the architects and exerting a beneficial influence upon all new building in our field."[14] The first step apparently involved setting up the art tile department with a full staff of artists and craftsmen--likely in 1924. After this department had "been organized and had justified its existence," the department head, J. E. Stanton, went on an overseas study tour for the making of fine art tile: "That pilgrimage of Mr. Stanton's was significant--it had to do intimately with the renaissance of decorative tile in the United States."[15]

J. E. (Jesse) Stanton was himself an architect, born in San Francisco and practicing in San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. He was associated with Warren & Wetmore in New York, a firm internationally known for its work in major railroad terminals and elaborate hotels,[16] and with Daniel H. Burnham in Chicago. Before joining Gladding McBean, Stanton was chief designer for Allied Architects and for Edwin Bergstrom, both of Los Angeles. The Allied Architects Association had been organized in July 1921 in Los Angeles, with 33 charter members and 70 architects by September 1924. The group only took on commissions for large scale public buildings. Jesse Stanton was also one of three directors of the Architectural Club of Los Angeles at the time he joined Gladding McBean.[17] Atholl McBean described Stanton in 1927 as someone who "already knows a great deal about tile, and could immediately enter into our plans."[18] Stanton was hired in March 1925 as head of the art tile department at Tropico, with the published announcement by the Architectural Club of Los Angeles that he would "shortly go to Europe for the Tropico Potteries Branch of the Gladding-McBean Company,"[19] From Spring 1925 until sometime in 1926, probably in a period of about a year, J. E. Stanton set up the Tropico plant for the manufacture of carefully crafted art tile.

In August, Gladding McBean hosted a meeting of the Architectural Club of Los Angeles at the Tropico plant. The meeting included a Mexican dinner; it was possibly a kick-off event for the new art tile as it immediately followed Stanton's return from overseas.[20] J. E. Stanton had taken a six month tour for Gladding McBean in preparation for their development of art tile designs: "His (Stanton's) itinerary included opportunities for factory research and study of celebrated tile installations, ancient and modern." Stanton's tour was to parallel a 1913 trip made by Willis Polk for Gladding McBean; Stanton was to do for decorative tile what Polk had done for roof tile. Out of his trip came a book of black and white photographs entitled By Middle Seas and published in 1927. By Middle Seas contained 77 plates, doubtless a selection from the several hundred photos taken on the tour. Forty or fifty of the photographs were on display at the August Architectural Club meeting. Stanton also made watercolor renderings throughout his overseas study.[21] His tour began in Spain, with special time given to the Alhambra and the Alcazar.

He then proceeded to North Africa, Italy, Constantinople, Asia Minor, and finally to the major European urban museums where he viewed some of the world's finest tile collections--carefully studying the magnificent examples at the South Kensington Museum. In By Middle Seas architect Arthur Brown Jr. commented that Stanton was moved by North Africa and Moorish Spain, and by the Turkish work by Persian artists in Constantinople.[22] As the Architectural Club has also noted: "Jesse has also brought back some very beautiful tiles and pottery from the Mediterranean countries. We prophesy that Gladding McBean tile is due for a rise."[23]

Shapes of Clay noted in April-May 1927: "A strong staff of artists is maintained (at Tropico), and the whole American industry is watching and studying the entirely new range that Gladding, McBean and Company is giving to this beautiful product."[24] In November 1925, Gladding McBean advertised its newly designed "Large Pottery Vase with Relief Decoration, Persia, 13th to 14th Century" in California Southland. Colors given for the illustrated pottery were "translucent cobalt blue, with gold, deep-sea green, and orange." This advertisement marked a definitive shift to Near Eastern colors and design theme.[25] Very little reference to Tropico's decorative tile appears in 1926, the year it must have set about making its first faience art tiles based upon Moorish and Persian color and design schemes. An advertisement for the Tropico decorative tile appeared in Architect and Engineer in October 1926: a photograph illustrated the dado of a vestibule wall for the Eisner residence in Los Angeles by architect George Kaufman. The tiles for the Belasco Theater, and hence for the 1025 P Street Building, were advertised in California Southland in February 1927 and must also be among the very earliest new patterns. Another probable 1926 pattern was illustrated for garden wall tile in California Southland in June 1927; no color schemes were cited, but the accompanying "Persian Oil Jar" was described as "azure blue."[26]

As 1927, 1928, and 1929 unfolded, illustrations and examples of the decorative art tile made at Tropico became more frequent.[27] Of more interest to the tile in the 1025 P Street Building is the increasing discussion of colors and glazes. Colors in California Southland of December 1927 were noted as "deep reds and blues." Perhaps the best description was in Shapes of Clay for November 1928--as these terms were Gladding McBeans's own: "Persian turquoise blue," "Persian cerulean blue," "Venetian red" and "cream white."[28] Other color schemes are mentioned in Shapes of Clay, although the basic colors seem to be a dark blue, a green-blue, black, cream (off-white) gold (deep yellow) and red-maroon.

Color sources seem to be an equal mixture of Moorish and Near Eastern--itself a reasonable historical association. Glazes discussed were typically of medium and high fired types. By the middle 1930s, the Tropico plant began to make another more mass-marketed pottery product: Franciscan Ware--adding to this line Franciscan Fine China in 1942. The apparent peak of the decorative faience tile was its earliest years, 1926-30, with art tile continuing alongside Franciscan Ware through the latter half of the 1930s.[29]

3. American Art Tile: Development During the 1920s

The development at Tropico Potteries by Gladding McBean, 1922-30, paralleled a larger series of events in the crafting of decorative tile in the U.S. A revitalized interest in architectural terra cotta followed immediately upon the close of World War I. In 1920 Walter Geer wrote The Story of Terra Cotta, detailing the history of major American firms and individuals involved in the art and craft of the medium. (Gladding McBean was discussed among the "Pacific Companies.") Interestingly, even in this very early publication the models for design and technique were the "Spanish Moors," with some references made to glazed tile from "Syria and Palestine." As Geer noted, the art form came into European prominence at Faenza, Italy, during the 15th century--hence the term "faience."[30]

Throughout the 1922-24 years, the major American architectural journals also began to concentrate on art tile and terra cotta. For example, Architectural Record ran two significant series of articles. The first, by Leon V. Solon, ran in six parts, January through June 1922. "Architectural Polychromy" treated different aspects of the craft, beginning by stressing the need for an historic model. Solon settled on Greek polychromy of the 6th -4th centuries B.C. as the appropriate model--denigrating the very "oriental and exotic architectural expressions" that were in fact to become the models chosen by the American tile companies. As the series developed Solon discussed different color theories for terra cotta and faience, noting that the refinement of faience and the methods for producing faience color and glaze would give it tremendous range as an architectural material in the years ahead. His most poignant point would become his most prophetic: architectural polychromy (of any kind) must use colors with a "high degree of radiant energy." The Greek palette that Solon espoused--black, dark and light blue, brown or mulberry, red, ochre, yellow and white--was of this type, and was related to the Near Eastern palette used by the Persians and Moors.[31]

During the remainder of 1922 and most of 1923 Solon wrote a series of independent articles for Architectural Record in its "Notes and Comments" section.

Here he discussed "radiant energy" and "tone-value;" further, also commenting on the simple and composite classes of color employed in the Gothic polychrome palette. By October 1922, although he was still clearly prejudiced against "Asiatic color sentiment" Solon was also arguing for those same sentiments. Solon rightly noted that Viollet-le-Duc's statements (a 19th century French architect commenting on medieval polychromy) about the impossibility of combining blue and yellow or blue and red were wrong. Solon noted further how black could be (and had been historically) used to heighten tone values; white to lower them.[32]

After these short editorial essays followed three separate articles in November 1922 and April and June of 1923. Solon again wrote the first: on the American Encaustic Tiling Company's New York offices. (Gladding McBean acquired their West Coast properties for the manufacture of floor and wall

tile in 1933, citing the company as of international significance.) Solon noted the "decorative development of tile...in this country": one of the selected color plates was for "Aetco-Persian" faience tiles that followed "the pattern-plan found on certain mosque towers of northern Africa."[33] The April 1923 article gave a short art historical summary of international tile work, noting that the peoples of North Africa and the southern edge of the Mediterranean derived their faience and glazing techniques directly from Persia. Finally, the June 1923 article bluntly stated the interest in historic Spanish interiors (which between the lines meant Moorish tiled interiors): "It will be interesting to watch developments, and perhaps to recall in a year or two that in the spring of 1923 we were just around the corner from a widespread Spanish Renaissance phase of architectural adaptation."[34]

After these independent articles over 1922-23 came the second significant series run by Architectural Record. Mildred Stapley and Arthur Byne, authorities on Spanish architecture and gardens--particularly the decorative crafts associated with them--wrote a ten part series, December 1923 through September 1924, entitled "Andalusian Gardens and Patios." The idea was to discuss the Spanish outdoor room (patio) and the garden in Andalusia--the southernmost Spanish province containing the historic and contemporary art centers of Granada, Seville and Cordova. Christians had reconquered Cordova and Seville in 1236 and 1248, also recapturing Granada in 1492. After these significant re-takeovers, the Christians had kept the Moorish artisan class and thus had "preserved the firmly implanted oriental tradition in the industrial arts." It was the 16th century Mudejar--Moorish word for Christians--architectural decorative tile, iron work, wooden ceilings, furniture and gardens that Byne and Stapley explicated for the professional art and architectural public of the 1920s.[35]

Architectural Record subsequently published Byne and Stapley's series of articles as a book in 1924. As such, Spanish Gardens and Patios was only one publication in a significant number of books written on the general subject of Spanish architecture during the 1920s. Perhaps not surprisingly Byne and Stapley themselves were responsible for the very best of these publications, their own books not few. Booklists of "Spanish Architecture" appeared during the 1920s as well. Two examples were one with about 30 listings published in Architect and Engineer in February 1923 and another of greater length published by Rexford Newcomb in The Spanish House for America, 1927.[36] Byne and Stapley's publications included Spanish Architecture of the Sixteenth Century (1917), Rejeria of the Spanish Renaissance (1914), Spanish Ironwork (1915), Decorated Wooden Ceilings in Spain (1920), Spanish Interiors and Furniture (two volumes, 1921), Spanish Gardens and Patios (1924), and Provincial Houses in Spain (1925). Other authors of books pertinent to Spanish decorative tile were A. L. Mayer (1921), A. F. Calvert (1924), W. L. Bottomley (1924) and F. R. Yerbury (1925). Rexford Newcomb wrote several volumes himself in 1927 and 1928.[37]

The articles and books of Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley, however, best revealed the 1920s sources and understandings for decorative art tile. Byne

and Stapley carefully described the Moorish faience tile--the azulejo. Azulejos were of two historical types: the cuerda seca and the cuenca. The cuerda seca process involved drawing a pattern on the wet clay square with grease and manganese to make the dry line (cuerda seca) that kept the colors separate from one another. All cuerda seca tiles thus had raised areas of color and depressed lines between color sections. The cuenca process reversed the final effect. Craftsmen pressed a metal matrix into the wet tile, thereby making a raised line that maintained the divisions of colors. All cuenca tiles had depressed areas of color and raised lines between color sections. The earliest Moorish azulejos, both cuerda seca and cuenca types, were of geometric and floral design only due to the religious taboos against human and animal images. Later stylized animal images were permitted.[38]

Azulejos vividly highlighted certain places in the Andalusian house and patio. Generally azulejos were used in the first story only. Families lived on the ground floor for coolness in the summer, and upstairs for warmth in the winter. Tilework helped to counteract the intense heat, as well as making it easier to keep insects under control. Azulejos were most often employed for wainscotting, floors, stairs, benches and wash basin areas.

As decorative accents, these tiles could also be found in single bands, inset wall panels and door or window surrounds--both interior and exterior. Azulejos also highlighted enclosed patios and gardens, again most often for wainscotting, wall panels, decorative bands, door or window surrounds, stairs, walks, benches, pools and fountains. These polychrome tiles complemented austere white stucco walls, and were themselves complemented by numerous large flower vases, glazed and unglazed. Tilework in Andalusian houses provided "the principal notes of individuality" for the house and its grounds. For interior and garden stairs, in particular, the glazed polychrome tiles were only used on the risers--with the nosing and tread of unglazed earthen red colored tile.[39]

Byne and Stapley also addressed technique of manufacture and sources of historic examples for azulejos. Such discussion provides some clear ideas for the range of historic antecedents that Gladding McBean (through the artistic direction of Jesse Stanton) relied on for its innovative work at Tropico. The three major historic and contemporary (1920s) art centers of Granada (with the Alhambra), Seville and Cordova were key--with Seville most significant. Seville not only was the urban setting for the Alcazar, a citadel (al-Kasr) with royal gardens of the Moorish kings, but also a major university and other royal residences. The Alcazar in particular had many tiled stairs, being described by Byne and Stapley as "a veritable museum of fine mellowed sixteenth-century azulejos" with many "fine early examples--cuerda secas, cuencas, and even mosaics--which those who are interested in old tiles should not fail to examine." Seville was the seat of great Christian wealth, partially confiscated from the Moors and partially resultant from the conquest of Mexico and Peru: its tile work was noted as exceptional.[40]

Furthermore, in the 1920s, the manufacture of azulejos remained a primary Sevillan industry. Without doubt, Jesse Stanton must have visited the

centuries old potters' barrio in Triana across the river from Seville. In this barrio, extensive pattern books existed with numerous established Moorish and Renaissance motives on file. Manufacture was booming during the 1920s, with heavy exportation to South America. Triana potters had been responsible for the exquisite 16th century tile work for which Seville was known, as well as for the brighter, more garish work in the city of the 1920s. Seville was also the chosen site of the Iberian-American Exposition planned for 1921. The exposition was rescheduled for 1925-26, but may never have been held as such.

However, the gardens and buildings were constructed--in place by mid-1923, if not before--in the upper part of Maria Luisa Park. Triana potters executed elaborate contemporary (1920s) azulejos for the exposition site (itself intended to become a permanent people's park). Architect Stanton must have visited all of the fine historic and contemporary azulejo sites in Seville, as well as the Triana barrio itself.[41]

Color and pattern models are other key issues relevant to the Tropico art tiles. Byne and Stapley discussed both. In the book Spanish Gardens and Patios (1924) several color plates for 17th century Andalusian tiles illustrated color treatment in orange, deep green and brown on cream; deep blue, maroon and green on white; and maroon and green on white patterns.[42] In the Alcazar, the 16th century tile colors of "brilliant yellow, blue and light green" were noted. These same colors were noted for the garden "del Rey Moro" in Ronda (Andalusia).[43] Andalusian 16th century colors appear to parallel color choice for the 1025 P Street stair riser tile. Byne and Stapley described the blue and green of the 16th century as "rich and limpid"--also parallel with the selected colors for the Strub Building stair riser tiles.[44] In Cordova polychrome tile was only occasionally used, but a tinted kalsomine whitewash in yellow ochre, Pompeiian red and ultra-marine blue was employed--with each color selected for particular design placement.[45] These four colors--brilliant yellow/yellow ochre, ultra-marine/cobalt blue, light green (aquamarine/light turquoise), and Pompeiian red (earthen red/brown/mulberry/maroon) --in conjunction with cream/off-white and black are the colors of the Strub Building stair riser tile and have basis in the 16th century polychrome tile colors and tinted kalsomine colors of Andalusia. The traditional Andalusian combination of glazed, radiantly colored decorative art tiles for risers--often used in more than one pattern in single staircases--with unglazed earthen red nosing and tread tiles is also found in the stair of the 1025 P Street Building. Such a combination generally replaces unadorned brick stairs (with the bricks set on edge at right angles to the direction of the stair) in the American Spanish Colonial Revival buildings of the early 1920s.

Sixteenth century Andalusian art tile patterns were generally stylized floral motives. Two motives often appeared on Andalusian stair riser tile: "the conventionalized pine tree" and "the Moorish crenellation." Gladding McBean certainly adopted the former (for example in the three building complex of Court House, Hall of Records and Jail in Santa Barbara of 1929), as did several architects--in the early years notable George Washington Smith, Lewis P. Hobart and G. H. Lansburgh, among others. The "crenellation" motif

discussed by Byne and Stapley may well be the alternating black and cream squares pattern, itself also heavily used in 16th century Andalusian stair riser tile. The black and cream motif appeared in the 1025 P Street building stairs every third step, and was a motif like the pine tree that was often employed during the 1920s.[46]

In broad terms, several other facts about the 1920-25 years are pertinent to the first decorative art tile made at Tropico, ca. 1926. Very little illustrated decorative tile appears in the national or regional architectural journals such as Architectural Record, Architect and Engineer or California Southland. However, some very simple patterns do appear as early as 1921-25 in Spanish Colonial mansions designed by prominent Southern California architects, including the conventionalized pine tree motif. (An excellent early example in Santa Barbara is George Washington Smith's own residence of 1921.)[47] These tiles, of course, were not manufactured by Gladding McBean. At the time Gladding McBean began to enter the field of decorative art tile with Tropico, autumn 1925, Batchelder Tiles appears to have been the most prominent art tile company for Southern California, with advertisements also appearing for the Talavera Importing Company, Cheesewright Studios (Pasadena) and the Italian Terra Cotta Company as well.[48] These art tiles were of a different type from the Spanish influenced faience tile, for the most part.

Decorative art tile does not begin to be heavily shown in architectural journals until after Gladding McBean had entered the market, 1925-26. The appropriateness of the tile for the Spanish Colonial Revival, however, undoubtedly affected its acceptance in California. Moreover, before Jesse Stanton made his study trip to Spain and the Near East, he must have thoroughly read all the pre-1925 Byne and Stapley articles and books, as well as other prominent books published between 1900 and 1925 on the subject. It is quite probable that Stanton attended the Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris of 1925 in addition (he did visit the Paris museums); the union of art and industry was a dominant late Arts and Crafts theme of this immediate period. By the 1927-28 years, tile companies across the United States were publishing their own pamphlets and short monographs on decorative art tile: Stanton most likely also read a number of these.[49] In any case, the stair riser tile present in the Strub Building at 1025 P Street in Sacramento, and also in the Belasco Theater in Los Angeles, represent one of the earliest coherent efforts at Spanish influenced decorative art tile of the mid-1920s--in California and in the U.S. as a whole. Gladding McBean's initial efforts at Tropico under the artistic direction of architect Jesse Stanton.

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Notes

The reference source for Part 1 and Part IIA is the "Study of the Existing Buildings on the Department of General Services Site 7, Sacramento, CA - Architectural and Historic Significance," by Karen Weitze which is Appendix B of the Draft Environmental Impact Report: Site 7 Complex for the California Secretary of State and the California State Archives, SCH #88020818, August 1988. References for Part IIB are listed below.

[1]Robert C. Mack, "The Manufacture and Use of Architectural Terra Cotta in the United States," in H. Ward Jandl (ed.), The Technology of Historic American Buildings: Studies of the Materials, Craft Processes, and the Mechanization of Building Construction, Washington, D.C.: Foundation for Preservation Technology, 1983, P. 117-51; Clay Products Institute of California, Clay Products Manual, Los Angeles: Kellaway-Ide Company, 1930, p. 9-11.

[2]"Belasco Theater, Los Angeles," Shapes of Clay, v. 111, #2, February 1927, p. 8.

[3]The Belasco Theater appeared in all the major regional and national architectural journals of 1927-2B: as examples see California Southland, v. 9, #86, February 1927, p. 6; John Bakewell, Jr., "Honor Awards of Southern California Chapter, AIA," Architect and Engineer, v. 89, #1, April 1927, p. 39-52; "Belasco Theater," Architectural Record, v. 62, #2, August 1927, plates; Architect and Engineer, v. 92, #1, January 1928, pp. 63-64.

Other theaters from this period employing similar elaborate tile work included several by Morgan, Walls & Clements. The Music Box Theater, in Los Angeles, by the firm noted, had an exterior facade closely resembling that of the Belasco Theater; interior treatment is unknown by the author. (See Architect and Engineer, January 1928, pp. 63-64.) In addition, the El Capitan Theater and Department Store in Hollywood, designed by G. Albert Lansburgh, appears (from photographs) to have had identical, or nearly identical, wainscotting tile to that of the Belasco. As it was also a 1926 design, the stair riser tile may have repeated that of the Belasco as well. (See "The El Capitan Theatre and Department Store Building, Hollywood," Architect and Engineer, v. 88, #2, February 1927, pp. 34-43.)

[4]The architect of the Strub Building, F. Eugene Barton, had worked as a key or chief draftsman for San Francisco architect Lewis P. Hobart prior to opening his own office in the spring of 1926. Hobart had recently employed Gothic influenced Period both reflected nascent national trends and influenced the directions of decorative art tile design in the immediately following years.

Revival styling for a vertical commercial block in San Francisco; Weeks & Day, another San Francisco firm, had completed the San Francisco Chronicle Building with many of the same motives in 1925. Barton, then, may have been basing his recently-independent design work on immediately-past design successes with

which he was familiar. In addition, Barton would have been well aware of the avant-garde decorative art tiles being produced at Tropico by Gladding McBean--through his association with Hobart. Lewis P. Hobart was one of the first California architects to employ the new tile in his design for the Del Monte Hotel in Del Monte, California. (Shapes of Clay, v. 11, #7, August 1926, and v. 1I1, #2, February 1927, plates.)

[5]"Decorative Tile: A Renaissance," Shapes of Clay, v. 11, #2, February 1927, pp. 3-4, 16. John Bakewell, Jr., "Honor Awards" Architect and Engineer, April 1927, pp. 39-52.

[6]"Belasco Theater," Shapes of Clay, February 1927, p. 8.

[7]Editorial, Shapes of Clay, v. I11, #2, February 1927, p. 7.

[8]Gladding McBean described technique with reference to its decorative art tile of this initial period in Shapes of Clay, v. V, #5, August 1929, caption for Plate V: "Court House-Hall of Records-Jail Building, Santa Barbara." The staircase riser tile in the Santa Barbara buildings was a partially glazed tile type, however--unlike the full moderate glaze in the Strub Building.

[9]Building and Contractor: "A New Enterprise," March 21, 1900, p. 1; "The Tropico Tile Works," August 16, 1900, p. 1; "Ornamental Tile," December 6, 1900, p. 1; "Tile Exhibit," January 3, 1901, p. 1.

[10]California State Mining Bureau, Bulletin No. 38: The Structural and Industrial Materials of California, Sacramento: State Printing Dffice, 1906, p. 217.

[11]"Gladding, McBean and Company, 1875-1927," Shapes of Clay, v. 111, #4, April-May 1927, p. 23.

[12]Gladding, McBean and Company, Supervisor's Policy Manual, 1957, p. A-61.

[13]Walter Geer, The Story of Terra Cotta, New York: Tobias A. Wright, 1920, p. 190; "Gladding McBean and Company, San Francisco. Tropico Potteries, Inc., Glendale," California Southland, v. 6, #49, January 1924, advertisement (also appears in California Southland, v. 8, #75, March 1926); "Latin Roof Tiles," California Southland, v. 7, #65, May 1925, p. 2.

[14]Atholl McBean in J. E. Stanton, By Middle Seas: Photographic Studies Reflecting the Architectural Motives of Various Cities on the Mediterranean, San Francisco: Taylor & Taylor, 1927, p. v.

[15]"Decorative Tile: A Renaissance," Shapes of Clay, February 1927, pp. 2-3.

[16]Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, "Warrent, Whitney," and "Wetmore, Charles D.," Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970, pp. 636-37, 647. Warren

& Wetmore had the commission for the Royal Hawaiian Hotel at about this same time. See Architect and Engineer, October 1927.

[17]"The Allied Architects Association," California Southland, v. 6, #57, September 1924, p. 17.

[18]Stanton, J. E., By Middle Seas, p. v.

[19]"Jesse Stanton Joins the Movies," California Southland, v. 7, #64, April 1925, p. 27: "All we have to say is that terra cotta will soon begin to look up. We are sorry to see Mr. Stanton leave the Legitimate and take to the movies so to speak."

[20]"Gladding-McBean Entertains," and "Jesse Stanton Returns" California Southland, v. 7, #69, September 1925, p. 29.

[21]"Jesse Stanton Returns," California Southland, September 1925, p. 29. Architect and Engineer published an example of Stanton's architecural watercolors in September 1927. (Russ Building, San Francisco: v. 90, #3.)

[22]Stanton, Jesse, By Middle Seas, p. v-viii.

[23]"Jesse Stanton Returns," California Southland, September 1925, p. 29.

[24]"Gladding, McBean and Company," Shapes of Clay, April-May 1927, p. 23.

[25]"Large Pottery Vase with Relief Decoration. Persia, 13th to 14th Century," California Southland, v. 7, #71, November 1925, p. 31.

[26]"Gladding, McBean and Company," Architect and Engineer, v. 87, #1, October 1926, p. 19; California Southland: "Decorative Tile (Belasco Theater)," v. 9, #85, February 1927, p. 6; "Garden Pottery," v. 9, #90, June 1927, p. 30. The Special Collections

Division of the California State Library in Sacramento also holds approximately 100 watercolor renderings and drawings, ca. 1927-37, from Tropico Potteries. The collection was just recently given to the State Library by the Brand Library of Glendale. As yet these drawings remain uncatalogued; it appears that the earliest drawings date to 1927 in this collection.

[27]See California Southland, v. 9, #92, August 1927, p. 29; v. 10, #97, January 1928, p. 35; v. 10, #98, February 1928, p. 26; v. 10 #100, April 1928, p. 30; v. 10, #107, November 1928, p. 15; and Shapes of Clay, 1926-29, passim. Shapes of Clay should be thoroughly searched, 1925-30, for early Tropico decorative art tile patterns. The only known complete collection of Shapes of Clay, to date, is held as a part of the Taylor & Taylor Collection at the California Historical Society Library in San Francisco. The California Historical Society Library is currently completely closed to the public.

[28]California Southland, v. 9, #96, December 1927, p. 35; Shapes of Clay, v. V, #2, November 1928, plates.

[29]Gladding, McBean and Company, Supervisor's Policy Manual, 1957, p. A-63.

[30]Geer, The Story of Terra Cotta, pp. 200-01.

[31]Leon V. Solon, "Architectural Polychromy: Parts 1-VI," Architectural Record: v. 51, #1, January 1922, pp. 1-7 (quoted material, p. 7); v. 51, #2, February 1922, pp. 93-100; v. 51, #3, March 1922, pp. 189-96; v. 51, #4, April 1922, pp. 285-91 (quoted material, p. 288); v. 51, #5, May 1922, pp. 377-86; v. 51, #6, June 1922, pp. 465-75.

[32]Leon V. Solon, "Notes and Comments," Architectural Record: v. 52, #1, July 1922, pp. 83-84; v. 52, #2, August 1922, pp. 164-68; v. 52, #3, September 1922, pp. 245-47; v. 52, #4, October 1922, pp. 356-58.

[33]Leon V. Solon, "The Display Rooms of a Tile Manufactory," Architectural Record, v. 52, #5, November 1922, pp. 362-70; Gladding, McBean and Company, Supervisor's Policy Manual, 1957, p. A-61.

[34]C. Howard Walker, "Architectural Polychromy," Architectural Record, v. 53, #4, April 1923, pp. 272-78; Matlack Price, "The Architectural of Renaissance Spain--Its Future as an Adapted Style," Architectural Record, v. 53, #6, June 1923, pp. 575-76.

[35]Mildred Stapley and Arthur Byne, "Andalusian Gardens and Patios," Architectural Record, v. 54, #6 - v. 56, #3, December 1923 - September 1924: pp. 489-506; 65-80; 177-93; 277-92; 373-88; 478-92; 569-77; 74-88; 161-77; 257-75.

[36]"Books on Spanish Architecture," Architect and Engineer, v. 72, #2, February 1923, pp. 81-82; Rexford Newcomb, The Spanish House for America, Philadelphia and London; J. B. Lippincott Co., 1927, pp. 163-64.

[37]See the above booklists for full titles and publishers.

[38]Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley, Spanish Interiors and Furniture, two volumes, New York: William Helburn, Inc., 1921, v. 1, p. ii, and, Spanish Gardens and Patios, New York: The Architectural Record, 1924, p. 77.

[39]Byne and Stapley: Spanish Interiors and Furniture, p. ii; Spanish Gardens and Patios, p. 89; "Andalusian Gardens and Patios," Architectural Record, v. 55, #2, February 1924, p. 177, 179. Rexford Newcomb, The Spanish House for America, p. 31.

[40]Byne and Stapley, "The Alcazar Gardens, Seville," Architectural Record, v. 56, #1, July 1924, p. 75, 77; Provincial Houses in Spain, p. ii.

[41]Byne and Stapley, Architectural Record: "Andalusian Gardens and Patios," v. 55, #2, February 1924, p. 181; "Patios and Gardens of Seville and Cordoba," v. 56, #3, September 1924, p. 257, 263; Eloise Olmsted, "The Iberian-American Exposition to be held in Seville, Spain, 1925-26," Architectural Record, v. 53, #5, May 1923, p. 396.

[42]Byne and Stapley, Spanish Gardens and Patios, p. 67.

[43]Byne and Stapley, "The Alcazar Gardens, Seville," Architectural Record, v. 56, #1, July 1924, p. 77.

[44]Byne and Stapley, "Garden Accessories," Architectural Record, v. 55, #2, February 1924, p. 181.

[45]Byne and Stapley, Provincial Houses, pp, i-ii.

[46]Byne and Stapley, Spanish Interiors and Furniture, p. ii. A. L. Solon, "Some Modern Uses of Glazed Tiles," Architect and Engineer, v. 86, #2, September 1926, pp. 76-77.

[47]For examples: Architectural Record: v. 49, #2, February 1921, p. 98; v. 52, #4, October 1922, pp. 324-27; v. 58, #5, November 1925, pp. 491-93; and, Architect and Engineer, v. 71, #3, Oecember 1922, p. 61; v. 81, #2, May 1925, p. 63, 112.

[48]California Southland, v. 7, #66, June 1925, p. 3, 29 and 30.

[49]One good example is Rexford Newcomb, The Ceramics of Saracenic Syria, Turkey and Egypt, Beaver Falls, PA: Associated Tile Manufacturers, 1927. Listed in Architectural Record, v. 61, #5, May 1927, p. 464
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